

Michigan
Department
of Human
Services

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DHS Office of
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(517) 373-7394

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Wednesday, September 10, 2008

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Amber Alerts to be posted on area's digital billboards

 Posted by [Denise Ford-Mitchell](#) | [Times News Service](#) September 10, 2008 09:11AM

 Categories: [Community News](#), [Courts and cops](#)

Ten minutes.

That's all the time it will take for law enforcement officers to broadcast vital information to tens of thousands of folks about missing children and criminals, thanks to a new statewide digital billboard effort.

The Outdoor Advertising Association of Michigan is allowing FBI and other police free access to its equipment across the state to broadcast Amber Alerts for missing and/or abducted children and to post the photographs and names of fugitives with local ties.

"As I'm sure any law enforcement official would tell you, time is precious in these cases," said Tom Carroll, president of the Detroit-based Outdoor Advertising Association of Michigan and vice president of Michigan Region for CBS Outdoor.

"When an Amber Alert is issued or local law enforcement gets word a dangerous criminal is in the area, we can have information up on our digital billboards in a matter of minutes."

In addition to CBS Outdoor, Baton Rouge, La.-based Lamar Advertising Co. and Adams Outdoor Advertising, which has Michigan offices in Ann Arbor, Lansing and Kalamazoo, are participating.

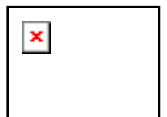
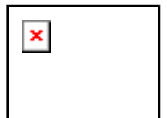
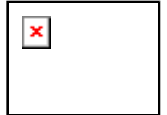
Amber Alerts are named for 9-year-old Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas, kidnapped and slain in 1996.

Though some billboard companies periodically use digital billboards for law enforcement purposes, this initiative formalizes a commitment from the major Michigan billboard companies with digital signs.

Lamar, Adams and CBS own a combined 32 digital billboards in Saginaw, Bay City, Mount Pleasant, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Port Huron and Traverse City.

Using digital billboards to fight crime has a track record of success.

Crime Stoppers, a nonprofit organization operating in Bay and Saginaw counties since the 1970s, has used the technology for the past two years. Tips have led to



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the capture of about 60 suspects whose pictures appeared on digital billboards, said Bart R. Dexter, director of Crime Stoppers for Saginaw and Bay counties.

"The digital billboards have been a huge help," Dexter said.

"Just last week, there was an arrest warrant out for a man wanted for criminal sexual conduct by Buena Vista Township police. Within 10 minutes of broadcasting his picture and the information on a digital billboard, someone turned him in, and police had him in jail 30 minutes later."

In the Amber Alert initiative, police send a description of the suspect or missing child, a phone number to call with tips, the suspected crime and photos to the billboard companies. The companies use templates to create the digital image that workers post on electronic billboards within moments.

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How to search for a parent or child

Wednesday, September 10, 2008

Kalamazoo

In Michigan

Michigan is considered a mutual-consent state, meaning both the adoptee and birth parent have to agree to information about them being released and to being contacted before that can happen. Generally, adoption records with non-identifying information can be accessed when the adoptee turns 18, and then either by the adoptee, the birth family -- including birth parents, siblings and grandparents -- or the adoptive parent.

- Start with your county's Probate Court to see what non-identifying information the adoption files might contain, such as the birth parent's age at the time of the adoptee's birth, the parent's heritage and religion, any medical history provided, the number of years of high school completed and the parent's hobbies, interests and occupation.

- Request that the court or adoption agency consult the Adoption Central Registry in Lansing to see if either the adoptee or birth parent has filed a consent or denial form. The court or adoption agency can review the records and determine if identifying information, such as a name or address, can be released to the searcher to help their search.

- If a consent form has been filed but contact information is out of date, searchers can continue to look on their own or hire a certified confidential adoption intermediary.

- If the adoption agency has closed, you can find who hold its records at www.michigan.gov/dhs. Click on "Adoption" on the right-hand side, then "Closed Adoption Record Information" on the left-hand side, then "Central Adoption Registry" in the center of the page.

- For more information, call the Adoption Division of the Michigan Department of Human Services at (517) 373-3513.

In other states

- For an overview of each state's laws concerning adoption records, visit the Web site of Adoption Reunion Resources at www.adoptionreunionresources.com and select the "State Info" button on the left-hand side of the page.

Other resources

- Adoptees' Liberty Movement Association (the ALMA Society), is a nonprofit, tax-exempt adoption reunion registry created in 1971 to assist searchers with their search through its established chapters and search assistants. For details, visit www.almasociety.org/index.html, or write to The ALMA Society, P.O. Box 85, Denville, NJ 07834.

- Operation Reunite is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing information and support to Vietnamese adoptees and to help reunite families separated by the Vietnam War. For details, call (609) 992-7196 or visit www.operationreunite.com



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Event to urge residents to register to vote

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By Staff reports**Hillsdale Daily News**

Posted Sep 09, 2008 @ 06:02 PM

Hillsdale, Mich. — The Hillsdale County Department of Human Services will be hosting a Voter Registration Fair on Sept. 12 where local residents can receive information about voting.

During the fair, which will take place from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Hillsdale County Department of Human Services at 40 Care Drive, attendees will receive information about voting, practice casting a ballot and register to vote.

Throughout the year, Michigan residents can obtain a voter registration application at their local DHS office or any office located throughout Michigan.

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Top Ads



Anxiety about staying warm spreads

September 10, 2008 12:00 am

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- Homeowners already pinched by high food and gas prices have grown increasingly anxious about staying warm this winter.

At state assistance offices and at community organizations, phones are ringing off the hook as people seek help with what are expected to be punishing heating bills. Legislators and governors from Alaska to Maine are watching the gap between surging need in their states, and assistance that may or may not be coming from Washington.

Aid agencies fear they may have to turn more people away, or give less cash assistance to individual families.

"People are very worried about this winter," said Ann Heidenreich, executive director of the nonprofit Community Energy Services in Canton, N.Y. "We're not going to deal with all that needs to be done, there's no way. We're going to have to deal with emergencies this winter."

The Energy Information Administration, a statistical division of the U.S. Department of Energy, projected last month that natural gas and heating oil will be at record highs this winter. In some cases, home heating oil, propane and kerosene is already twice as high as it was two years ago, meaning that a dollar of federal aid will not travel nearly as far this winter.

Making things worse is an economy that has left many more people without jobs, and left state treasuries bare.

Vermont budgeted \$4 million to buttress federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds this winter, but that money has eroded along with the state economy, one official said.

"We were told nothing would be coming from state general fund dollars," said Richard Moffi, from Vermont's Office of Home Heating Fuel Assistance.

In Congress, members from the Northeast pressed unsuccessfully this summer to add billions to the LIHEAP program, which helps poor families with one-time fuel costs or a heating emergency, like a broken furnace. Last year, the federal government set aside \$2.6 billion; this year President Bush has proposed just \$2 billion, and it is unclear when Congress will act, or how much it will approve.

Connecticut legislators recently approved \$44 million to help residents, schools and others with heating costs and weatherization while Vermont is trying to cull more firewood from state forests to heat homes.

Maine, which received \$38 million last year from the federal government, would need \$70 million just to deliver the same benefit in light of rising fuel prices, said Jo-Ann Choate, the manager of energy and housing services for the Maine State Housing Authority.

"This is a real crisis for the Northeast," she said.

Choate said many residents are carrying a past-due balance from last winter's bills.

On Tuesday, the EIA released data projecting that heating fuel expenditures for the average household using oil would

Anxiety about staying warm spreads

increase 30 percent over last winter, and 19 percent for natural gas.

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House tackles early out retirement options for certain workers

Gongwer News Service

Sept. 9, 2008

The House Labor Committee took testimony Tuesday on legislation that would provide early out retirement to some employees in the Third Circuit Court and during House session, lawmakers voted 66-39 on a bill **providing an early out option for some workers at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School.**

[HB 5966](#), which was voted on by the chamber, is a companion bill to [HB 5944](#) that the House previously sent over to the Senate (See [Gongwer Michigan Report, June 10, 2008](#)). The package is intended to offset a legislative budget decision in the Department of Human Services' Bureau of Juvenile Justice that led to the layoff of more than 130 workers.

The Labor panel took testimony on [HB 6379](#), which would allow employees in the court who have 80 years of combined age and length of service to retire from their positions early, a move proponents of the bill said would offset a proposal by Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano to lay off 295 court employees.

While those people work for Wayne County, the court system was previously under state control so those workers remain under the state retirement system.

Matt Dreger, a court recorder and member of the Mount Clemens City Council, told the committee there are about 100 vacancies in the court and the legislation would affect about 150 people, meaning that would practically reach the threshold set out by Mr. Ficano to save money in the budget while still allowing lower paid, lower seniority workers to keep their jobs.

But there was some trepidation from Republican lawmakers, including one who supported the early out for Maxey employees, over how much the early out for court employees would cost and whether providing such a benefit would be too generous.

[Rep. Rick Jones](#) (R-Grand Ledge) said in the Maxey case, workers are dealing with violent offenders and he understood the need for a carve-out. But he urged the committee to not continue that pattern and instead approve a bill that provides an early out option for all state employees.

He said that would allow older employees who want to leave the ability to do so while at the same time hiring younger employees and keeping that talent in Michigan.

The idea of an early out for all state employees has been kicked around for some time, particularly with the state in a budget crunch. But no legislation has made it to [Governor Jennifer Granholm](#)'s desk. The governor does not support an early out program for all state employees because of the lingering brain drain effects the last early out program had.

During committee, [Rep. Lorence Wenke](#) (R-Richland) also argued the bill would a grab by these employees to get a "bigger piece of the pie" in terms of retirement dollars. And he said that scenario is completely out of line with the conditions facing private sector employees.

Mr. Dreger argued Mr. Wenke's analysis was off base and that taxpayers would be saving money if the court could reorganize itself with a younger, lower paid workforce.

The Department of Management and Budget testified in opposition to the bill because of the added costs to the retirement system, but the measure does have support from the UAW.

Michigan Department of Human Services Media Advisory

Contact: Edward Woods III (517) 373-7394 or (517) 927-1884

Media roundtables to be held in Traverse City, Marquette and Alpena Focus on reducing poverty and maximizing economic opportunities for all

A series of media roundtables will be held in these communities to showcase local efforts to reduce poverty and maximize economic opportunity. DHS Director Ismael Ahmed will be joining DHS county directors, regional partner leaders and community residents, to talk about how Michigan families and individuals are finding creative solutions to these challenging economic times.

Poverty continues to impact hard-working Michigan families. The Michigan Department of Human Services, with the assistance of regional partners, is working aggressively to reduce poverty and maximize economic opportunities for all.

Media Roundtables will be held:

Wednesday, Sept. 10

2 p.m.

Goodwill Inn, Dining Hall

2943 N. Keystone Road, Traverse City

Thursday, Sept. 11

10:30 a.m.

Faith in Christ Fellowship Church, Agape Cafe

145 W. Ridge St., Marquette

Friday, Sept. 12

11 a.m.

Alpena Community College, Room 106 Center Building

665 Johnson St., Alpena

For more information, please consult the DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs or www.michigan.gov/poverty